



Department of Health,
P.O. Box 5013,
Wellington.

10 November 1981.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 208

To Medical and Dental Practitioners
(Copy to Proprietors of Retail Pharmacies)

DRUG TARIFF 1981, AMENDMENT NO. 2: EFFECTIVE 1 DECEMBER 1981

This Clinical Services Letter will be the only record most will have of the present changes to the Drug Tariff. As it is not a cumulative list it is suggested that this Letter, along with earlier Clinical Services Letters, should be retained for reference purposes.

There were certain omissions from the Drug Tariff 1981 due to printing procedures. Amendment No. 1 which was not circulated corrected this situation.

1. To be available from a retail pharmacy:

Additions

Antazoline phosphate with naphazoline hydrochloride eye drops in packs of 10 ml (Albalon-A);
Azatadine maleate syrup and tablets (Zadine);
Chloramphenicol with polymyxin B sulphate eye drops (Chloromycin);
Clindamycin hydrochloride in extemporaneously prepared skin lotions;
Glucose oxidase with peroxidase diagnostic strips (Diabur Test);
Glucose oxidase with peroxidase and sodium nitroprusside with aminoacetic acid diagnostic strips (Keto-Diabur);
Idoxuridine with dimethyl sulphoxide if extemporaneously prepared and not exceeding 10 ml per prescription form;
Paraffin liquid with paraffin white soft eye ointment (Lacri-Lube);
Sodium nitroprusside, buffered, diagnostic strips (Ketur-Test);
Tetrabromophenol blue diagnostic strips (Albym Test).

Alterations

Nicotinic acid—no restriction on the dosage strength.

2. To be available from a retail pharmacy on a prescription or a practitioner's supply order endorsed "Approved Condition".

Alterations

Contraceptives, diaphragms;
Contraceptives, spermicidal agents.

3. To be available from a hospital pharmacy on the prescription or recommendation of an appropriate specialist:

Addition

Cefuroxime sodium injection (Zinacef).

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4. Mebendazole tablets (Vermox):

The availability of these tablets under the Drug Tariff has been limited to a maximum of six tablets per prescription.

A number of prescriptions for high doses of mebendazole tablets for prolonged periods have been received for payment by the department. This suggests that it is being used to treat hydatids.

The Minister of Health's consent to distribute this medicine does not include the treatment of hydatids as an indication for its use. Payment from public funds cannot be made, therefore, for mebendazole used in the treatment of hydatids. The importing company has ceased the distribution of clinical trial supplies following the publication overseas of several cases of leucopenia following high dose therapy.

5. To be available only on a wholesale supply order:

Alterations

Sodium chloride injection in quantities exceeding 50 ml per unit;
Water for injections in quantities exceeding 50 ml per unit.

6. Deletions:

The following have been deleted from the Drug Tariff:

- (1) Cloxacillin sodium (Orbenin) capsules and syrup. This preparation is more expensive than flucloxacillin which has a wider spectrum of activity. The injection will remain a charge under the Drug Tariff.
- (2) Zinc undecenoate with undecenoic acid cream and dusting powder (Mycota). This has been removed from the Drug Tariff following a request from the company marketing Mycota. Usage appears to be minimal. Zinc undecenoate dusting powder BP and zinc undecenoate ointment BPC remain a charge under the Drug Tariff.

DIMETHYL SULPHOXIDE

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee wishes to remind practitioners that caution should be exercised in the use of dimethyl sulphoxide. Reference made to this preparation in Clinical Services Letter No. 180 is still considered pertinent. Because of the concern for the period for which it should be used, payment under the Drug Tariff from 1 December for extemporaneously compounded preparations of idoxuridine with dimethyl sulphoxide is limited to a maximum of 10 ml per *prescription form*.

AMPICILLIN

It is likely that oral forms of ampicillin will be removed from the Drug Tariff from 1 April 1982. This recommendation has been made by the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee mainly in view of the necessity for strict patient compliance in the time at which this medication should be taken if absorption is to be maximal. The committee was of the opinion that, in practice, these requirements were probably met only rarely. There are other medications available in which the timing of the dose is not so critical. Cost was not a factor in this recommendation.

INDICATIONS FOR DEBENDOX

The department has always supported the view that no medicines should be given during pregnancy unless they are essential (see Clinical Services Letter No. 193.)

With this view in mind the Committee on Adverse Drug Reactions and the department have recently agreed to accept a revised data sheet for Debendox in which Debendox is indicated for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, **only if they are unresponsive to conservative measures and are sufficiently distressing to require drug intervention.**

INTENSIFIED ADVERSE DRUG REACTION REPORTING SCHEME

The Committee on Adverse Drug Reactions has stressed the importance of dates of birth on prescriptions in identifying a particular patient in an emergency situation. While this is particularly important in the case of IADRRS medicines, the Department of Health also wishes to encourage the recording of dates of birth on all prescriptions.

Pharmacists are asked to record dates of birth together with the other prescription data for IADRRS medicines. The forms provided will, in future, contain an extra column for this information.

The following medicines are included in the scheme:

Captopril (Capoten);
Nifedipine (Adalat);
Sodium valproate (Epilim);
Sotalol hydrochloride (Sotacor);
Tocainide hydrochloride (Tonocard).

BREAST PROSTHESIS BENEFIT

Government has recently approved two changes to the breast prosthesis benefit. Women who had a mastectomy performed before 29 July 1976 and women who had a mastectomy performed overseas are now entitled to the benefit of \$40 per year towards the cost of replacement prostheses. In the case of women who had a mastectomy performed overseas, they must otherwise be entitled to receive health benefits in New Zealand.



(J. S. Phillips)
Director, Division of Clinical Services.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

We require urgently, applications from registered medical practitioners for the position of Medical Officer, Whataroa Special Area which will fall vacant in the middle of November 1981.

The practice is based from Whataroa, with clinics held at Hari Hari, Franz Josef, Fox Glacier, and Haast. District nurses are located in each of the towns.

There is a modern primary school at Whataroa and a secondary school at Hari Hari. A rent free house and an equipped surgery are available.

The salary range is from \$26,383 to \$32,631 at present but from January 1982 will be based on medical officers special scale up to a maximum of scale 3.

The successful applicant would be entitled to have a dispensing contract which would be a source of additional income.

Further details and conditions of appointment can be obtained from the Director, Division of Clinical Services, Department of Health, P.O. Box 5013, Wellington.